

State of Wisconsin
Department of Natural Resources
Manual Code 9523.1 – Records Management



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Date

Rescinds and Replaces: New
Division: Internal Services

Approved by OMT: 01/08/2016
Next Review Date: 2020

I. SCOPE

This manual code applies to all department records

II. POLICY

- A.** To ensure compliance with applicable statutes and codes and to promote consistency, all Department records needed for internal and external informational purposes and meets legal requirements for managing records by supporting a Department-wide records management program and managing records in all media, in all locations. Detailed procedures are further specified in the Records Management Handbook, 9520.5.
- B.** All records created, received by or which the DNR is required by law to file, deposit, or keep in the office, regardless of media, are the property of the state and shall be managed effectively as business resources and assets throughout their life cycle.
- C.** The DNR shall maintain, preserve and dispose of records in accordance with all records laws and records retention/disposition authorizations (RDA), as approved by the Public Records Board.

This policy does not include information on Open Records. See Manual Code 9521.1 “Open Records”.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Public Record:** ““Public records” means all books, papers, maps, photographs, films, recordings, optical disks, electronically formatted documents or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made, or received by any state agency or its officers or employees in connection with the transaction of public business, ...”
[s. [16.61\(2\)\(b\)](#), Wis. Stats.].
- B. Record:** “Record” means any material on which written, drawn, printed, spoken, visual, or electromagnetic information or electronically generated or stored data is recorded or preserved, regardless of physical form or characteristics, which has been created or is being kept by an authority.
 - “Record” includes, but is not limited to, handwritten, typed or printed pages, maps, charts, photographs, films, recordings, tapes, optical disks, and any other medium on which electronically generated or stored data is recorded or preserved.
 - “Record” does not include drafts, notes, preliminary computations and like materials prepared for the originator's personal use or prepared by the originator in the name of a person for whom the originator is working; materials which are purely the personal property of the custodian and have no relation to his or her office; materials to which access is limited by copyright, patent or bequest; and published materials in the

possession of an authority other than a public library which are available for sale, or which are available for inspection at a public library.” [s. [19.32\(2\)](#), Wis. Stats.]

C. Legal Custodians of Records

By statute, the legal custodian of all DNR records is the Secretary. The Secretary has appointed persons in the following positions as legal custodians of all records under their supervision:

- Division administrators
- Secretary directors
- Bureau directors

Legal custodians may further delegate custody of records to employees holding positions that have custody of records. The legal custodian is ultimately responsible for all record keeping decisions and compliance with all record laws and requirements.

IV. PROCEDURE

Assignment of Records Management Responsibilities

Each DNR employee is responsible for complying with records management requirements in performing day-to-day functions. Employees should follow records management listed below.

A. Records and Property: Maintain, manage and file public records, including email records, as the property of the state, not as personal property, and pass records on to successors. Maintain records in accordance with the disposition requirements of the Records Disposal Authorization (RDA). Do not destroy records unless the Public Records Board has approved the RDA.

B. RDA Policy and Procedures: As necessary, develop RDAs for Public Records Board approval, within one year after each record series is created or received. Work with DNR Records Officer and program records coordinators.

C. Program Records Coordinators

Some programs appoint records coordinators to coordinate records management issues and concerns within the work unit and maintain effective communications with the Records Officer and others as needed. Coordinators cannot be expected to perform all record keeping functions in the unit. Each records coordinator shall assist in the following activities and shall be responsible to the legal custodian of records for the following.

- **Records Management Handbook:** Direct unit personnel to the Records Management Handbook, all records management manual codes, state records management guidelines, and standards.
- **RDA Policy and Procedures:** Ensure that RDA policies are established for all media (paper and electronic) records, and coordinate unit compliance with RDAs. Maintain RDAs for program records and make them available for others to use.
- **Storing Records:** Coordinate "off-site" storage and disposition of records at the State Records Center or other appropriate storage facility. Maintain an inventory of program records sent to off-site storage.

- **Public Notice:** Assure that each DNR location displays a public notice as required under s. [19.34\(1\)](#), Wis. Stats., giving a description of the DNR and the times, places, and procedures for the public to inspect, copy or receive copies of DNR records, and the costs.
- **Records Projects:** Facilitate audits and feasibility studies of record keeping practices, including manual filing systems, use of office space, records work flow and processing, transfer of records to alternative formats, i.e., optical disk, microfilm, electronic applications, as needed.

D. DNR Records Officer

The Records Officer has overall records management program responsibilities to ensure that DNR manages records in compliance with records laws and requirements. The Records Officer also provides technical assistance and guidance in all areas of managing records, including policies and procedures, records series inventory, personally identifiable information, records retention/disposition authorizations (RDAs), record practices, training, and filing.

- **RDAs:** Manage the RDA development and approval processes, involve the program records coordinators, submit the draft RDA to the Public Records Board for approval, and maintain a centralized file of all approved DNR RDAs.
- **Policies and Procedures:** Establish records management policies and procedures, including a department-wide Records Management Handbook.
- **Personally Identifiable Information:** Identify procedural requirements for collecting, using, and releasing personally identifiable information that can be associated with a particular individual [ss. 15.04(1)(m) and 19.35(1)(am), Wis. Stats.] for records coordinators and other staff.

E. Bureau of Legal Services

Attorneys in the Bureau of Legal Services provide legal advice and assistance for the records management program:

- **Policies:** Review and approve all policies and procedures.
- **Records Retention/Disposition Authorizations:** Review, revise, and approve draft RDAs before they are submitted to the Public Records Board.